

VZCZCXRO0635
RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNN
DE RUEHGP #2244/01 3610415
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 270415Z DEC 07 ***ZFR***
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4641
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SINGAPORE 002244

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [SN](#)
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE "POSTPONES" GAY RIGHTS AFTER LIVELY
DEBATE

SINGAPORE 00002244 001.2 OF 003

****ZFR****ZFR****ZFR****ZFR****

DISREGARD SINGAPORE 2244.

MESSAGE WILL BE RESENT UNDER ANOTHER MRN.

SINGAPORE 00002244 002.2 OF 003

ZFR*ZFR****ZFR****ZFR****

SINGAPORE 00002244 003 OF 003

heterosexual values and giving homosexuals space to live their lives. Until there is a broader consensus on decriminalizing homosexual sex, Singapore will stick to the status quo," he said. However, at the close of the Parliamentary debate, PM Lee assured citizens that while the statute would remain on the books, the law would not be actively enforced.

Comment

11. (C) The unusually spirited public debate over repeal of Article 377A reflects an ongoing "social opening" as the GOS tries to recast Singapore as a cutting edge (as well as stable and secure) place to visit and live. More characteristically, it was part of carefully managed political exercise in which senior GOS leaders established the parameters of discourse and then steered the machinery of government to a preordained outcome. LKY's prominent role suggests he remains, even in semi-retirement, the brains and master tactician behind Singapore's social engineering. However surprising his nod toward gay rights -- at 84 years, one might expect him to be among the "conservative older" denizens whose sensibilities need protecting -- his solution was vintage LKY; i.e., utterly pragmatic. As he told the New York Times in a recent, unrelated interview, Singapore must "go in whatever direction world conditions dictate"; if we are not connected to this modern world" we'll go back to the fishing village we once were." In effect, the GOS message to gay activists was "yes, the ban on homosexuality is unfair and will be repealed when the old folks die off; in the meantime, we'll leave you

alone." Interestingly, there was little discussion of the ban's blatant gender discrimination. If the outcome was predetermined, there was little point in opening that second can of worms.

Visit Embassy Singapore's Classified website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eap/singapore/index.cfm>
HERBOLD